



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Contact:
Bob Anderson, 601-634-5760
Pam Vedros, 601-634-7783

Operation Watershed Recovery: Damage Assessments

VICKSBURG, Miss., August 3, 2011 – Following the Great Flood of 2011, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Mississippi Valley Division continues to assess damages and prioritize repairs to the Mississippi River and Tributaries flood control system. The repairs will ensure the future integrity of flood control projects along the Mississippi and its major tributaries and restore function to critical project components. All of this recovery work will require significant funding; initial estimates show as much as \$1 billion may be needed.

Without supplemental funding to address the flood and navigation system repair costs, the Corps is looking at internal funding sources to reset and repair the most critical flood control projects damaged by this year's event. Budgets are forecast 2-3 years in advance so the additional damage to the infrastructure is above and beyond what was budgeted for normal operations, which means other programs won't be maintained in order to ready the system for the spring flood season.

Damage assessments began from the time the waters started to rise and are ongoing. Teams of engineering specialists have walked the levees, identified seeps, boils, slides and other anomalies, documented, and uploaded information to a GIS system. Now that the waters are receding, these teams continue to do assessments and will prepare documents to identify the location, nature, extent, repair alternatives and preliminary repair cost estimates for these project areas. These teams have worked in difficult conditions, record breaking heat and wildlife on the levees (snakes, alligators, deer seeking refuge on the only high ground). All assessments being done are utilizing a Damage Assessment Report in order to keep data gathering consistent. These DARs are being done in a manner that will ensure all reaches of levee, all structures and all navigational river miles have been inspected, documented and prioritized, as safety of lives and livelihoods are the top priorities. With the assessments, cost estimates are being derived to determine total funding needs to reset the system before the spring floods.

The reports will be submitted to an oversight team that will ensure consistency, functionality and quality assurance of the process and products. One of the team's challenges will be to develop, or follow existing, prioritization criteria to create a rank-ordered list of reset and restore projects. Should funding become available, those priority list items would be taken care of in order. However, new critical areas can still appear as the levees dry out or sediments in the river fall out causing dredging issues. As such, the priority list will be a living document that may be superseded by daily events. The first draft of prioritized projects is due the second week of August.

There are a total of 74 identified "hotspots" or areas of concern for the Mississippi valley, however that number has increased as waters recede and dredging, dikes and revetment areas become an issue. All site assessments at those locations have preliminary findings submitted for ranking.

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